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March 5, 1986

The Honorable William J. Casey  
 Director of Central Intelligence  
 Central Intelligence Agency  
 Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Bill:

Again, let me thank you for including me in the Intelligence Community Conference on the 27th. I found the discussions of what you, as a Community, expect from the Committee and what we expect from you to be enlightening and useful. This relationship is, of course, established by law but legal definitions are sketchy at best. The law does not and should not define what Bob Gates has described most aptly as the "social contract" between us. As I see it, this contract is built on three pillars:

- o Understanding and appreciation of each other's mission, operating environment and objective;
- o Mutual trust and confidence expressed in public -- as well as private; and
- o Communication

It is clear that the Intelligence Community looks to the Committee to share the special burden that comes with knowledge of the most sensitive secrets in government, a burden which carries with it a unique and special responsibility. The Community expects that because of our understanding of intelligence, we will act as a buffer between those who do not understand and appreciate it and the Intelligence Community. The Committee should, therefore, stand tall when we know the difference between myth and reality, truth and falsehood -- stand tall with the press, the Administration or even our colleagues. The Intelligence Community expects to be given the benefit of the doubt

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by the Committee because we know firsthand the integrity and dedication of Agency personnel.

The Committee should be expected to speak out on those things which the Intelligence Community is doing well. Public praise and private criticism is the epitome of the demonstration of our trust and confidence. That is our half of the social contract.

But the contract has two parties. From the Committee's perspective, these same expectations pertain to the Intelligence Community's reactions to the oversight process. The reaction should be based on the recognition of the Committee's unique role in assuring the American people and our colleagues in the Senate that we are conducting evenhanded, objective oversight of activity to which they are not privy. Our need for full and open communication by the Intelligence Community flows from that unique role, as well as from the desire of Congress to make our intelligence system as effective as possible.

The trust the public has in the Intelligence Community is, in large measure, a function of the trust the public has in the integrity of the oversight Committees. It is our expectation that there will be no presumption that the Committee is irresponsible in the discharge of their special responsibility to protect the Nation's secrets -- or assumption that anything other than enhancement of the national security motivates the actions of our Members or staff. That is your half of the contract.

In sum, it is fundamental to our trust in the Community that you have absolute willingness to share with us the information we need to do our job. It is fundamental to your trust in us that we always use the information responsibly. And it is fundamental to our relationship that both sides base their actions and statements upon that trust.

In looking back over the past year, it seems to me that this social contract has not been strengthened as much as I had hoped -- not because of any ill intention by either side, but rather due to a weakness in the third pillar -- communication. I think the fundamental problem is the tendency to allow someone else to interpret views or positions, attitudes or reactions. One example is to believe bad news from some one

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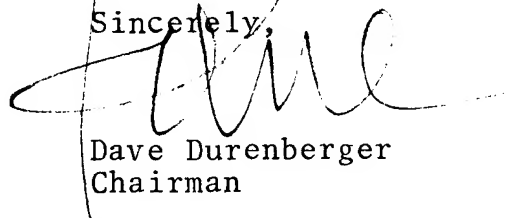
who is not privy to all the facts. Another is reliance on the press as interpreter. I have spoken often on the positive aspects of intelligence, the quality and dedication of the people, and the value to the policymaker of intelligence product. In particular, all my public statements in reference to the Intelligence Strategy were designed to achieve what Leo Cherne, in his recent speech, said was vital to the future of intelligence:

"The functioning of U.S. foreign intelligence will remain seriously hampered until the American people better understand the nature of the role of foreign intelligence, the importance of its functioning, and its indispensability if peace is to be preserved."

Despite this, the press continues to print stories on the Strategy with a critical and controversial slant. I would hope that no one in the Intelligence Community would accept Times' interpretation of the Committee view on the Strategy any more than the Committee would accept the Washington Times' statement that quoted the DCI as saying the CIA simply "rewrote the Agency's plans to keep Durenberger happy." There are numerous other examples. I would only observe that since we both know how inaccurate the press is when they report on events with which we are very familiar, we should be equally skeptical of other stories about each other. This is, I think, the basic message John McMahon articulated so well for us on Thursday.

The strength of this social contract is fundamental to the effectiveness of oversight and of the intelligence process. With that objective, I intend to share the thoughts in this letter with the other members of the Community, the Committee, and its staff. I hope you can do the same with appropriate personnel in the Agency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dave", with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the name.

Dave Durenberger  
Chairman